

a stop to playing politics with Haitian lives, and it is time to respond to the unfolding crisis in Haiti. I urge the administration to withhold, to lift the embargo, on the dollars.

For those who have supported the IDB year in and year out, it has been terribly disappointing to me that they have continued to acquiesce in the demands of the Bush administration to deny the disbursements of these dollars. I hope they will take the action of saying they have waited long enough and they will provide the assistance needed to the Haitian people.

We are about to leave for a month and the situation is growing worse. I ask my colleague to take a look at the David Gonzalez article in the New York Times yesterday. This is a snapshot of what is going on in the country and what desperately poor people are suffering as a result of the lack of support. They would suffer anyway. I am not suggesting this will solve all their problems. It is hard to believe we are holding up the funds—seeing how these people live, how these children are being raised, only a few miles off our shore, when we could make a little bit of a difference. We could also strengthen the very institutions we are complaining so strongly about if we provided that kind of help.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE NETWORK

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, I regret to come to the floor today with a concern that I find absolutely extraordinary—even shocking.

This is a memorandum which represents an extraordinary broken promise to the veterans of our country. I want to share it with my colleagues who I think would share with me a sense of outrage over what is contained in this memorandum.

This is a memorandum from Laura Miller, Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Health for Operations and Management, which she circulated on July 18. It orders the directors of the Veterans Health Care Network in the country to end their veterans outreach activities.

Let me read from the memorandum. It says specifically:

In this environment, marketing the VA services with such activities as health fairs, and veteran open houses to invite new veterans to the facilities, or enrollment displays at VSO meetings are inappropriate. Therefore, I am directing each network director to ensure that no marketing activities to enroll new veterans occur within your networks.

In other words, the promise made to veterans and their families that these services will be available to them—and many of them don't know exactly what all the services are—that is why we put into place the outreach efforts in order to guarantee that people aren't denied those services which they might have forthcoming. Those services are not

now going to be provided. They are not going to be reaching out to veterans to make them aware of them. I find that absolutely extraordinary.

There are approximately 70 million people who are potentially eligible for VA benefits and services because they are veterans and family members or survivors of veterans. They stand to lose those benefits because the VA is simply going to hide or retreat from reaching out in the way that all of us here in Congress specifically codified and put into law that they do.

I know the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is a Vietnam veteran and is a distinguished, decorated veteran. I absolutely can't believe that he knows this went out. I can't believe that it went out under his order, particularly when you compare it to his own statement on the VA Web site. There is a statement by the Secretary that says:

Our goal is to provide excellence in patient care, veterans' benefits and customer satisfaction. We have reformed our department internally and are striving for high-quality, prompt and seamless service to veterans.

With respect to "prompt," in this memo the Deputy Under Secretary says:

The most recent enrollment shows a 13.5 percent increase in users this year compared to the same time last year, and a 15 percent increase in enrollment while expenditures rose 7.8 percent. Against the outcome of this situation is a waiting list for patients to be seen in many clinics across the country and general waiting times that exceed VHA's standard of 30 days. Moreover, actuarial projections indicate a widening gap in the demand versus resource availability.

"Demand versus resource availability"—those of us from New England sat with the Secretary several months ago and made it clear to the Secretary that there is an increasing crisis in our VA system because of the lack of resources.

The "greatest generation" veterans—those of World War II—are now demanding services of the VA in greater numbers than before. Our military efforts these days are increasing the awareness and the need of many people who served for those services. Yet here we are being told we have demand that is exceeding the resources.

The resources don't have to be exceeded. That is a matter of budgeting priority of this administration. There are many areas where it is obvious that the administration has decided it is more important to put money, rather than for the veterans, and in order to keep the promise to the veterans of the country.

In today's Greenfield Recorder in Massachusetts, a VA spokesperson said the reason the VA has cut these services is "because right now we can't give them the kind of care that they deserve."

That is an extraordinary statement in the face of the current situation

with troops in Afghanistan and other parts of the world, with the increasing demand of our military and with potential operations in Iraq that are the subject of hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today.

Under Secretary Miller's memorandum notes that enrollment has increased by some 15 percent. So the budget ought to reflect that. The budget ought to reflect that we need to keep the promise to our veterans. The fact is, almost every single budgeting effort in the last few years has been inadequate for the VA. The VA has consistently received less funding than necessary facing this growing demand.

In the fiscal year 2002 budget, there was initially an \$80 million shortfall for veterans medical care in New England alone. And although this region has confronted the most severe shortages, the situation throughout the country has been similarly bleak.

This year, and in previous years, colleagues in the Senate have fought to try to up that amount of money. Last week, Congress passed a supplemental with some additional \$417 million, but the fact is, the increase in this year's spending is not adequate to meet the demand. It is critical that we provide veterans services to nearly 5 million veterans in 2003.

It is almost so obvious that it should go without saying, but I hope this is going to be reversed immediately. I hope the administration is going to keep America's promise to our veterans. And I hope they will plus up that budget sufficiently to meet the demand and to keep faith with the promise made already to the past several generations of veterans and the promise that is today being made to the next generation of veterans.

I yield the floor.

MAJ. GEN. WILLIE B. NANCE, JR.,
U.S. ARMY

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, very soon one of our Nation's finest soldiers will retire from active duty after more than three decades of dedicated service to our country. Major General Willie B. Nance, Jr., will retire from the United States Army on November 1, 2002, after serving for 34 years. During his distinguished career, General Nance served in a remarkable range of roles, from buck private to two-star general, from foot soldier to the manger of one of the most sophisticated weapon systems our nation has ever built. General Nance, I am proud to say, is a native of Mississippi, and I believe it appropriate that the Senate take note of his distinguished career as his retirement approaches.

General Nance entered the Army in 1968 as a member of the Mississippi All-Volunteer Company, a group of 200 Mississippi volunteers who enlisted at the same time under an Army volunteer enlistment campaign. Having proven himself early as a soldier, he was recruited directly from Basic Training